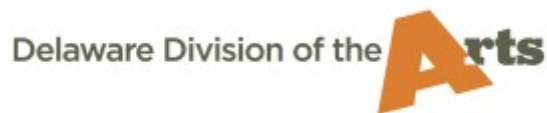


Thirteen High School Students to Compete in 2017 Delaware Poetry Out Loud State Finals



The annual poetry recitation finals will be held at the Smyrna Opera House on Tuesday, February 28 at 7 p.m. The event is free and the public is

welcome to attend. Scott F. Mason, president of Chapel Street Players and award-winning actor, playwright, and director will serve as the Master of Ceremonies and introduce the speakers. He will be followed by Paul Weagraff, director of the Delaware Division of the Arts and the Honorable Jeffrey W. Bullock, State of Delaware secretary of state, who will greet contestants and give opening remarks. J. Mack Wathen, chair of Delaware State Arts Council will conclude by recognizing the panel of adjudicators.

Each of the 13 participants will recite three poems that they have selected, studied, and practiced, representing more than 40 different poets including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Langston Hughes, Lord Byron, Lewis Carroll, and Gwendolyn Brooks. The recitations are inspiring, moving, sometimes humorous, and always engaging. The winner will receive \$200 and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, DC, to compete in the national championship from April 25-26, where \$50,000 in cash prizes and school stipends are awarded.

The 2017 Poetry Out Loud participants are:

<u>Name</u>	<u>School</u>
Glynnis Leach	Concord High School
Carly LePore	Dover High School
Shalyn Littlejohn	Hodgson Vo-Tech High School
Natalie Nwanekwu	Newark Charter Jr./Sr. High School
Shannon Murray	Padua Academy
Nick Thompson	Polytech High School
Ryan Washington	Sanford School
Tania Laurent	Seaford High School
Mollie Russell	St. Mark's High School
Sam McGarvey	Tall Oaks Classical School
Jane Krukiel	Ursuline Academy
Andrew Dingwall	Wilmington Christian School
Cecilia Ergueta	Wilmington Friends School

To learn more about each high school student and their reasons for participating in Poetry Out Loud, please read their biographies [here](#).

Scott F. Mason, president of Chapel Street Players and award-winning actor, playwright, and director will be the Master of Ceremonies. Adjudicators include Chantalle Ashford, Russell Susumu Endo, Ajit Matthew George, Joseph Masiello, Devon Miller-Duggan, and Jane Rubini. They bring their personal and professional experience as poets, educators, and performing artists to judge the participants on physical presence, voice and articulation, appropriateness of dramatization, level of difficulty, evidence of understanding, overall performance,

and accuracy. Delaware State Arts Council member, Dr. Donna Blakey, will serve as the accuracy judge, ensuring that competitors recite the poems correctly.

About Poetry Out Loud

The Delaware Division of the Arts sponsors the Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest program in Delaware schools and the state finals. Competition begins at the classroom level in the fall and culminates with the state finals each spring. Twenty schools and over 2,000 Delaware students participated in the Poetry Out Loud program in the current academic year. The Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest competition is presented in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. For more details about the partnership and program, see the program overview [here](#).

About the Delaware Division of the Arts

The Delaware Division of the Arts is an agency of the State of Delaware. Together with its advisory body, the Delaware State Arts Council, the Division administers grants and programs that support arts programming, educate the public, increase awareness of the arts, and integrate the arts into all facets of Delaware life. Funding for Division programs is provided by annual appropriations from the Delaware General Assembly and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. For more information about the Delaware Division of the Arts, visit artsdel.org or call 302-577-8278.

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